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The Code and Powers

As a former Air Force officer, did not Francis Gary Powers ever hear about the military Code of Conduct (NATIONAL AFFAIRS, Feb. 26)? Under this code, American military personnel captured by an enemy must avoid divulging any useful information and refrain from making confessions harmful to their country.

To argue that Powers was not technically in the military at the time of his capture and therefore not bound by the code is nonsense. Is a high-paid volunteer so much better than an American soldier fighting for his

country that the first is free to do as he pleases if captured while the second is not?

I am a bit skeptical of an Administration that will bend so far over backward to help free a man whose philosophy during his Communist trial seemed to be: "I regret I have but one country to lose for my life."

ROBERT A. SCOTT

Los Angeles, Calif.

►What is the deep mystery surrounding the disappearance of Francis Gary Powers? Did he emerge from behind the Iron Curtain only to go behind a "Brass Curtain"? Do the CIA officials fear to let him tell the press the truth? Perhaps he is receiving a second brainwashing before being allowed his constitutional right of free speech. I, for one, think he is getting a very raw deal.

STEVE REESE
Irwin, Idaho

►I was interested to hear that Powers may soon be recommissioned a major in the U.S.A.F. Has his conduct been such that he now may be a leader in our armed forces? I for one say, no.

EDWARD J. REASON
Des Moines, Iowa

►Let's get the full story before we condemn Powers' behavior. I wonder what some of his critics would have done in his place.

DAVID JOHNSON
Chicago, Ill.